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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: IRISH REACTION TO ETHIOPIAN POST-ELECTION PERIOD

REF: STATE 99185

Classified By: ACTING POL/ECON CHIEF JOE YOUNG,  
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B), (D)

1. (C) Summary. In response to reftel points, Department of Foreign Affairs Deputy Sub-Sahara Africa Director Pat Kelly noted that the vote counting process in Ethiopia lacks transparency and is a cause for concern. He said the Irish participants in the European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM) are promoting dialogue and the use of legal recourse in filing complaints. Overall, according to Kelly, the EUEOM was "genuinely impressed" with the election campaign and voting procedures, noting that campaigns were well-organized, rallies and demonstrations were peaceful, and the GOE allowed the media appropriate air time and impartial coverage. He added that the EUEOM is now pressing the GOE to allow adequate media coverage of the vote counting to promote reconciliation between the government and the opposition. He said that the final tally may need to be delayed beyond the June 8 deadline in order to ensure transparency and a fair count. End summary

2. (C) Kelly's answers below are keyed to reftel questions:

--According to Kelly, the EUEOM visited approximately 500 polling stations and found more support for the opposition than the government is now reporting. The National Election Board's preliminary reports do not tally with observations and early EUEOM predictions for results. Though the elections were handled with credibility, the vote counting is not transparent and is cause for concern.

--Bilaterally, the GOI will not issue any statement or take steps to assist in managing the post-election process or fraud elections. Kelly said proper vote counting in this election is very important to Ireland, but it is important that the EU speak in one voice for all Member States.

--Kelly said that the decision of how long to remain in country needs to be addressed by the EU Commission and the EUEOM. He added that Ireland stands ready to support the current vote counting and future elections. Kelly, along with two Irish parliament members, and five other observers had monitored the Ethiopian elections, primarily in the Somali region of Eastern Ethiopia. This region maintains 23 Ethiopian constituencies, but due to security concerns voting in this region has been tentatively deferred until August 2005.

--Kelly observed that unfettered access to all aspects of the vote tabulation process for the monitors and media should have been in place from the beginning, and should apply in future elections. He added that access is to be granted in pending run-offs and that elections will take place in disputed areas such as the Somali region in Eastern Ethiopia.

--Kelly said that the most important steps to take with the opposition include providing legal avenues to file disputes with the National Election Board (NEB) and pressing the government to allow ample media coverage to the vote tally process. He said that it would be more effective for the EU to deliver this message with a single voice than for the Member States to speak separately. Ireland has no plans to make direct overtures. He added that in order to reach a fair outcome of the tally, the results may need to be delayed beyond the June 8 deadline.

KENNY